

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 /062 W
-----001603 090922Z /20

O 090837Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8330
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 3325

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, PBOR, PEPR, SY, LE, IS, UNSC
SUBJ: SYRIAN VIEWS ON SOUTH LEBANON

1. DURING DISCUSSION WITH CHARGE JUNE 8, PRESIDENTIAL POLITICAL ADVISOR DAOUDY HAD LITTLE TO ADD TO OUR KNOWLEDGE OF ASSAD-SARKIS MEETING OR DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH LEBANON. DAOUDY DESCRIBED SYRIA'S ROLE IN LEBANON TODAY AS TWO-FOLD; FIRST, TO HELP PRESIDENT SARKIS MAINTAIN ORDER AND RESTORE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY, AND SECOND, TO MEDIATE BETWEEN LEBANESE AND PALESTINIANS. HE DESCRIBED LATAKIA MEETING BETWEEN ASSAD AND SARKIS AS A GOOD, GENERAL DISCUSSION BETWEEN TWO PRESIDENTS WHICH CLEARED THE AIR OF POSSIBLE MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND AMBIGUITIES. BOTH HAD AGREED THAT THEY SHOULD FULLY SUPPORT UNIFIL IN ITS ROLE IN SOUTH LEBANON AND ASSAD HAD GIVEN A GENERAL PLEDGE OF SUPPORT TO SARKIS. THE TWO PRESIDENTS HAD DISCUSSED SENDING LEBANESE ARMY UNITS TO SOUTH LEBANON AFTER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL BUT HAD NOT DISCUSSED MODALITIES. I PROBED THIS ISSUE FURTHER POINTING OUT THAT IS
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WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO INSTALL LEBANESE TROOPS IN SOUTH AND TO SUPPLY THEM WITHOUT HAVING A TRANSIT CORRIDOR UNDER LEBANESE CONTROL. THIS MIGHT BE DONE EITHER BY MOVING ADF SOUTH AT SOME POINT OR UNIFIL NORTH TO CREATE A CONTROLLED PASSAGEWAY OR BY HELPING LEBANESE THEMSELVES OPEN SUCH A CORRIDOR BUT I DOUBTED THAT PALESTINIANS COULD BE RELIED ON TO ASSURE UNOBSTRUCTED LAF PASSAGE, PARTICULARLY

IN LIGHT OF ATTITUDE OF HABBASH AND ALF AND CONTINUED IRAQI PRESENCE IN THIS ZONE. DAOUDY ACKNOWLEDGED HABBASH AND ALF COULD POSE PROBLEM AND THAT IRAQIS MIGHT ATTEMPT TO RAISE TENSION IN LEBANON IN ORDER TO DRAW ATTENTION AWAY FROM THEIR INTERNAL SITUATION. HE BELIVED, HOWEVER, THAT ARAFAT WOULD BE COOPERATIVE REGARDING PASSAGE OF LEBANESE FORCES. HE SAID THAT SO FAR AS HE KNEW ASSAD AND SARKIS HAD NOT DISCUSSED SUCH DETAILS.

2. DAOUDY DOUBTED THAT ADF FORCES WOULD DEPLOY SOUTHWARD TO THE LITANI FOR TWO REASONS, FIRST, SUCH A MOVE COULD BE INTERPRETED AS AN EFFORT TO RESTRICT PALESTINIAN ACTION AND THUS AS ACTING ON BEHALF OF ISRAEL. SECOND, ISRAEL HAD SPECIFICALLY OPPOSED ANY FURTHER SOUTHWARD MOVEMENT OF ADF TROOPS IN THE PAST. COMMENT: DAOUDY HERE RECALLED WITH SOME BITTERNESS PAST SYRIAN-US EXCHANGES ON THIS SUBJECT. I HAD THE IMPRESSION HE WOULD NOT WANT TO GO THROUGH THIS PROCESS AGAIN, I.E., THE PROCESS OF GETTING ISRAEL'S REACTION THROUGH USG FOR A SOUTHWARD DEPLOYMENT OF ADF AND THIS IN ITSELF MIGHT BE AN IMPORTANT FACTOR WEIGHING AGAINST SUCH A MOVE.)

3. ON THE QUESTION OF HOW TO HANDLE MAJOR HADDAD, DAOUDY TOOK POSITION THAT HE WAS A CRIMINAL BUT SAID PRESIDENT SARKIS HAD TO FIND A WAY TO DEAL WITH HIM. HE DISCOUNTED POSSIBILITY THAT HADDAD MIGHT BE BROUGHT TO SYRIA FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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"RETRAINING", POINTING OUT THAT SUCH A MOVE WOULD HARDLY BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE LEBANESE FRONT.

4. RE TUENI'S SUGGESTION USUN 2357 THAT WE AGAIN URGE SYRIA TO CONTINUE TO BE HELPFUL IN ITS EXCHANGES WITH THE GOL AND PALESTINIANS, I RECOMMEND WE HOLD OFF UNTIL AFTER ISRAELIS HAVE WITHDRAWN SINCE NO ACTION BY SYRIANS OR LEBANESE WAS CONTEMPLATED BEFORE THEN IN ANY CASE. SYRIANS ARE IN NO DOUBT REGARDING US POSITION AND REPORTING FROM VARIOUS SOURCES INDICATES SYRIANS ARE URGING PALESTINIAN COOPERATION.
PELLETREAU

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978DAMASC03325
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780241-0304
Format: TEL
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780678/aaaacotb.tel
Line Count: 106
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c9e7c58c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2422113
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SYRIAN VIEWS ON SOUTH LEBANON
TAGS: PORG, PBOR, PEPR, SY, LE, IS, UNSC
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c9e7c58c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014